

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 2862

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EFIN, CZ, US

SUBJECT: CLAIMS AGREEMENT

1. ZANTOVSKY (HEAD SIXTH DEPARTMENT MFA) CALLED IN DCM NOVEMBER 19 FOR DISCUSSION OF CLAIMS AGREEMENT SITUATION. READING FROM PAGE OF HANDWRITTEN NOTES, HE BROUGHT UP A LIST OF ITEMS THAT ARE OR WOULD BE AFFECTED BY LONG-GRAVEL AMENDMENT.

2. SPEAKING GENERALLY, HE SAID IT WOULD BE HARD TO MOVE AHEAD ON ANY US-CZECHOSLOVAK MATTERS UNTIL RIGHT MOMENT CAME, AND RIGHT MOMENT WOULD BE SIGNING OF CLAIMS AGREEMENT. (IN THIS CONNECTION HE REPEATED CUSTOMARY STATEMENT THAT MFA WAS KEEPING PRESS FROM PUBLICIZING TROUBLES OVER LONG-GRAVEL AMENDMENT, BUT HAVING INCREASING DIFFICULTY DOING SO.)

3. ONE EMBASSY OFFICER, MR. BENNETT, WAS GOING AROUND BRATISLAVA TELLING PEOPLE CONSULATE GENERAL WOULD BE OPENING VERY SOON; THIS WAS IRRITATING PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY HAD NO OFFICIAL WORD ABOUT OPENING OF CONGEN (AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, ALL EMBASSY OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN SAYING SAME THING; CZECHOSLOVAKS OBVIOUSLY PICKED BENNETT OUT BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN ON SCENE IN BRATISLAVA.) ZANTOVSKY SAID IN MFA RESPONSE TO OUR NOTE ON SUBJECT, THEY WERE AS DIPLOMATIC AS THEY COULD BE, AND SAID THEY WOULD GIVE OFFICIAL REPLY "AS SOON AS POSSIBLE," WHEN MEANT CONFIDENTIAL

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"WHEN NORMALIZATION TAKES PLACE." IN MEANWHILE OUR OFFICERS

SHOULD AVOID TAKING FOR GRANTED THAT APPROVAL ALREADY GIVEN. (IN PASSING ZANTOVSKY MENTIONED THAT NOTHING CONCRETE HAD COME OUT OF DETENTE SO FAR IN US-CZECH RELATIONS, NOT EVEN CONSULAR CONVENTION, WHICH HAD BEEN APPROVED BUT NOT YET SIGNED AND RATIFIED. HE ADDED THAT "ONE RESULT OF THE CONSULAR CONVENTION WOULD BE THE CONSULATES GNERAL.")

4. ZANTOVSKY NOTED THAT CZECHOSLOVAK SIDE HAD "NOT BEHAVED IRRATIONALLY" ABOUT WESTERN ART AND PROGRESS AND ENVIRONMENT EXHIBITS, DESPITE LONG-GRAVEL AMENDMENT. HE THEN BROUGHT UP CZECH PRESS CRITICISM OF WESTERN ART EXHIBIT, DISSOCIATING MFA FROM IT BUT SAYING CRITICISM COULD ALWAYS OCCUR. HE MENTIONED NOT SEEING WESTERN ART EXHIBIT HIMSELF IN PRAGUE, AND DCM SUGGESTED HE MIGHT HAVE CHANCE TO SEE IT IN BRATISLAVA. ZANTOVSKY SAID NOTHING TO INDICATE EXHIBIT WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE, BUT DID ASK IF "STATUES" (PRESUMABLY ARTIFACTS) WOULD NOT BE SHOWN; DCM SAID THEY WOULD NOT BECAUSE SPACE DID NOT SUFFICE IN EXHIBITION HALL ASSIGNED US, AND ZANTOVSKY SAID IT WOULD BE BETTER EXHIBIT WITHOUT THEM. (GENERAL THRUST WAS OBVIOUSLY THAT IF LONG-GRAVEL PASSED, WE SHOULD NOT COUNT ON LARGE NUMBERS OF US EXHIBITS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA.)

5. ZANTOVSKY THEN TOOK UP BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION IN 1976 IN US AND ABROAD, AND ASKED US TO GIVE HIM ALL POSSIBLE DETAILS ABOUT WHAT WAS PLANNED, NOT ONLY BY EMBASSY IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA BUT AS REGARDS FOREIGN PARTICIPATION IN US. HE SAID HE WAS INTERESTED IN "SCOPE" OF US PLANS. AT END OF CONVERSATION DCM RETURNED TO THIS ITEM AND SAID ID DID NOT SOUND NEGATIVE ENOUGH TO FIT IN LIST ZANTOVSKY HAD GIVEN, AND HE WONDERED IF HE HAD MISSED THE POINT. ZANTOVSKY THEN TIED BICENTENNIAL IN MORE SPECIFICALLY WITH LONG-GRAVEL, AND SAID IF AMENDMENT WENT THROUGH, OBVIOUSLY ALL MATTERS OF THIS KIND WOULD BE AFFECTED.

6. REGARDING THE US MAGAZINE SPEKTRUM, ZANTOVSKY SAID MFA HAD OUR NOTE CONCERNING A LARGE INCREASE IN CIRCULATION, AND WAS NOT YET ABLE TO REPLY. EMBASSY WAS REQUESTED NOT TO DO ANYTHING IN THIS MATTER UNTIL A SPECIFIC REPLY WAS RECEIVED. DCM SAID HIS IMPRESSION WAS THAT WE WERE NOT ASKING CONFIDENTIAL

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PERMISSION, WE WERE MERELY INFORMING AUTHORITIES, AS COOPERATIVE GESTURE, OF OUR PLANS TO INCREASE CIRCULATION. ZANTOVSKY SAID HE WAS NOT THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR WITH MATTER, BUT WOULD HAVE TO ASK US TO "OBSERVE PREVIOUS ARRANGEMENT" AND NOT TO ALTER IT WITHOUT CHECKING WITH PRESS DEPARTMENT OF MFA. (DCM DID NOT REPLY TO THIS POINT.)

7. FINALLY, ZANTOVSKY BROUGHT UP CLOSED AREAS, ONCE AGAIN SO

OBLIQUELY THAT DCM HAD TO PRESS HIM AS TO WHERE THE NEGATIVE POINT WAS. (AFTER ZANTOVSKY SPOKE OF NED TO ABOLISH CLOSED AREAS, DCM REMINDED HIM THAT HIS DEPUTY RECENTLY TOLD US THIS MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE RIGHT AWAY IN VIEW OF LONG-GRAVEL; ZANTOVSKY THEN ACKNOWLEDGED THIS WAS CORRECT, BUT SAID ABOLITION OF CLOSED AREAS WAS STILL DESIRABLE AND SHOULD BE "PART OF NEW PACKAGE" ONCE CLAIMS AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED.) ZANTOVSKY THEN BROUGHT UP SPECIFIC REFUSAL OF EMBASSY OFFICER'S REQUEST TO GO SKIING IN CLOSED AREA, AND SAID THIS REFUSAL WAS OWING TO LONG-GRAVEL SITUATION. (DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO LOOK INTO CURRENT RECIPROCAL STATUS ON CLOSED AREA EXCEPTIONS.)

8. COMMENT: ZANTOVSKY WAS OBVIOUSLY UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO PRESENT US WITH A BUNDLE OF NEGATIVES, AS PART OF GOC NEGOTIATING POSTURE. HE PROBABLY DID IT AS AMIABLY AS POSSIBLE UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.
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